

edge of Gravesend Wood and captured a single White-spotted Pinion. Hopefully larvae will be searched for and found in this area and at Chalkney Wood in 2005. Other Essex sites with elms will also be investigated.

The above indicates that the White-spotted Pinion appears to have maintained a foothold in Essex to date, despite the ravages of Dutch elm disease. The confirmed breeding on elm re-growth at Langenhoe, in the absence of mature trees, offers encouragement that it may survive in other areas where mature elms have been lost.

I would like to thank all the above-named for light-trapping and for helping with the larval work. The larval fieldwork and preparation of this report was undertaken with financial support from Butterfly Conservation, English Nature and Writtle College, Essex, as part of the Action for Threatened Moths Project to advance the National Biodiversity Action Plan.— PAUL WARING, Reader, Centre for Environment & Rural Affairs, Writtle College, Essex. Contact address: Windmill View, 1366 Lincoln Road, Werrington, Peterborough PE4 6 LS (E-mail: paul_waring@btinternet.com).

Anachronistic appearance of two geometrids (Lepidoptera)

Whilst trapping in Wormley Wood, Hertfordshire (part of the Broxbourne Woods complex) on the afternoon of 11 December 2004, amongst the thousands of *Erannia defoliaria* (Cl.) (Mottled Umber), *Operophtera brumata* (L.) (Winter Moth) and *O. fagata* (Scharf.) (Northern Winter Moth) caught were five *Phigalia pilosaria* (D.& S.) (Pale Brindled Beauty), and three *Agriopis leucophaearia* (D.& S.) (Spring Usher). I also recorded *A. pilosaria* at nearby Cheshunt, in the Lea Valley which separates Hertfordshire from Essex, on 18 December 2004. The generally accepted flight periods of these moths is, in most British textbooks, January/February for *A. pilosaria* and February/March for *A. leucophaearia*.

Colin Plant informs me that of the 116 records of *pilosaria* in the Hertfordshire Moth Database, the vast bulk of those that include specific dates, and which were recorded in the years up to and including 2002, fall between the first week of February and mid March, with occasional examples at the end of March. However, in 2003 and 2004 there was a smattering of January reports as follows:

15.1.03 – Codicote (R. Cheeseman); 18.1.03 – Thunderfield Grove (M. Cooper);
27.1.03 – Astonbury Wood (C. W. Plant); 27.1.03 – Royston (J. Chainey);
17.1.04 – Wormley (M. Cooper); “January 2004” – Ware (Liz Goodyear).

Hertfordshire records of *A. leucophaearia* in the same database number 68 – all of which fall after the start of February apart from the following:

21.1.98 – Elstree (P. Alston); 17.1.04 – Wormley Wood (M. Cooper); 26.1.03 – Bricketwood Common (C. M. Everett) and 27.1.03 – Astonbury Wood (C. W. Plant).

It seems that there has been a slight shift in the date of appearance of these two species in Hertfordshire in the last two years; this is evidenced at more than one site. Is this, perhaps, an indication of how climate has changed?

Maybe it is about time we renamed some moth species? Spring usher, March moth, November moth, Pale November moth, December moth, Winter moth, Northern Winter moth, July Highflyer all seem to be inappropriately named nowadays. In the opposite direction of time displacement I had a buff footman *Eilema depressa* (Esp.) during October 2004 at Thunderfield Grove, another part of the Broxbourne Woods complex.— MARK COOPER, 37 Hobbs Close, Cheshunt, Hertfordshire EN8 0EB (E-mail: badmotsco@ntlworld.com).

***Xylocampa areola* Esper (Lep.: Noctuidae) – The Early Grey. Unseasonable record**

In May and early June of 2004, specimens of *Xylocampa areola* Esper, the Early Grey, were common at lights run in my garden on the Suffolk coast. It seemed unusual then, to find a specimen in the garden trap again on 24 November 2004. As its occurrence is described in volume 10 of *The Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland* as only 'exceptionally recorded in December' I felt that such a sighting should go into print as either a late or a very early Early Grey. A record of *Apamea monoglypha* Hufnagel, the Dark Arches, two days earlier on 22 November 2004, is not so exceptional, but from my experience, is a little out of the usual flight period.— DAVID WILSON, Lark Rise, Dunwich Road, Blythburgh, Suffolk IP19 9LT.

First record of Large Red Damselfly *Pyrrosoma nymphula* (Odon.: Coenagrionidae) in Shetland

On 29 June 2004, Tony and Beth Gerrard saw a red dragonfly flying over the small pond in their garden at Sandgarth, north of Voe, in the central part of Mainland, the largest island in Shetland. They only saw it briefly but discussion about its identity centred around the possibility of one of the strong-flying and migratory *Sympetrum* species. On 3 July, they managed to photograph the insect and they e-mailed the photographs to me. The photographs clearly showed a male *Pyrrosoma nymphula*. This species breeds widely throughout the British islands, including Orkney, but it has not been recorded previously from Shetland. Within the Odonata, dragonflies are known to be strong migrants, but the damselflies are not usually thought of as migrants. The garden pond which the Shetland insect frequented had not had any plants added to it for at least two years, and it is in a remote area with no other garden ponds nearby. This would appear to rule out the possibility that the insect arrived as a larva with plants, so it must have arrived under its own steam. The only breeding dragonfly in Shetland is *Enallagma cyathigerum* (Common Blue Damselfly), another species of damselfly from the same family.— M. G. PENNINGTON, 9 Daisy Park, Baltasound, Unst, Shetland ZE2 9EA. (E-mail: mike@pennington.shetland.co.uk).